

Universidade Católica Portuguesa – Lissabon

2021-2022

PREPARATION
exchange application process
Applying for an abroad study programme always takes some work. You really need some time to compare different universities and the different applications. I knew I wanted to do my year abroad in the south of Europe and then you easily end up in Portugal or Spain. Then I compared the different political faculties with each other. I found out that for a lot of Spanish universities you have to have a certain level of Spanish. In the end I had one university in Spain and one in Portugal. Portugal was my first choice. Then you have to upload different documents which takes some time to find out where everything belong, but once you finished all the documents you are fine. I worked out my studyplan and talked to the exchange office about the process which was very helpfull. Then you write your motivation letter and let the waiting begin! When I got accepted to the universities I needed some patience. Portuguese universities are very slow, I needed to wait long to receive signatures. In the end it al turned out fine.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
The exchange office was always very pleasant in contact! When they need signatures they always respond very quickly and they are always ready to answer questions. Also Hetty Faber was quick in contact and I had a pleasant conversation with her where she helped me compare different universities to each other.
academic preparation
Coming from the Utrecht School of Governance was definitely an advantage to the study program of the political faculty of Católica. The programme is very political so coming from a totally different studies could be challenging I imagine. I didn't really do academic preparation for the study.
language preparation
I didn't do any language preperation, the programme states all the courses you state are in English which was true. It is maybe nice to practice some Portuguese before coming, but it is not necessary for the programme.
finances
I saved some money for my exchange but not that many. During my stay I was still able to receive DUO, I got my Erasmus Grant which was around 1200 euros (from which you get about 900 during your stay and 300 after). I also applied for public transportation compensation which was about 90 euros a month for three months. I subrented my room in Utrecht so I could use that money for my own room in Lisbon. Portugal is cheaper than the Netherlands but beware you also spent more money on fun activities!

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
I think the courses sounded pretty interesting when I applied to the university. I needed to take 6 courses in order to meet my 30 ECTS, which sounded like a lot at first. In the end it was fine because the most courses didn't take that much time during a week. When I got there it was not possible to have a schedule where my

courses wouldn't overlap, but they said that it was fine if I consulted the professor about it. The way of teaching in Portugal is very focused on receiving. The teacher talks and the students listen. I personally think most courses were given in a bit boring way where there was not that much interaction and a lot of talking. In most courses it was very history focused and less on today politics which I think was a shame.

academic quality of education activities

I think the academic quality of the lessons was quite high, you could see that the teachers were really experts on the subjects they taught. The level of examination was very different. Tests were most of the time very short with only two or three questions. The questions were often very broad so most of the time you ended up writing an essay. The paper assignments were also very broad with often not very clear guidelines. I didn't have that much examination, only a few tests, essays and an occasional presentation.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

To be honest I am really a fan of Portugal but not so much of this University. They really have some administrative issues. When I got to Portugal I had no schedule, books or any idea when my semester was going to start. There was not really much response from the university either. I ended up just physically going to university and talking to the Erasmus contact person. He could give me a little more information and a starting date. When university started there wasn't really a welcome day at the faculty. During the first week you can still switch courses if you don't like them. It took a few weeks for the university to get their affairs in order, so I couldn't access the online university environment and the articles I needed to read until much later. I only got my student number and email address maybe a month in. When going abroad to Portugal you really need to take a relaxed and flexible mindset, because nothing will go according to plan. But to end on a good note, aside from the organisational struggles, Lisbon is an amazing city for an exchange experience.

transfer of credits

This took a bit long, I still had tests to complete the week before I left so the teachers took some time to grade everything.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There wasn't really a welcome programme at my university, so I decided to seek it myself. You have a programme called Erasmus Life Lisboa, which is an organisation that hosts many activities for exchange students in Lisbon. They have their own office and website where they offer a lot of discounts and explain everything you need to know about for example public transportation. You can subscribe to activities online, which I did many times in the start. Here I met all my friends and we did many fun things like walking tours, surfing, beach trips and even a trip to the Algarve! I would definitely suggest to subscribe to this programme because it's the ideal way to meet a lot of people.

accommodation

I find my place via the Erasmus Life Lisboa site where they also have a housing programme. They tell you which places are reliable and affordable. Here are some links where you can find houses:

- [https://www.uniplaces.com/accommodation/lisbon?budget-max=40000&budget-min=0&east=-9.1239953041077&housing-type\[\]=residence&move-in=2021-09-01&move-in-type=exact&move-out=2022-02-01&move-out-type=exact&neighbourhood-id=414&north=38.715183916814&rent-type\[\]=unit&south=38.708247931862&west=-9.1307866573334](https://www.uniplaces.com/accommodation/lisbon?budget-max=40000&budget-min=0&east=-9.1239953041077&housing-type[]=residence&move-in=2021-09-01&move-in-type=exact&move-out=2022-02-01&move-out-type=exact&neighbourhood-id=414&north=38.715183916814&rent-type[]=unit&south=38.708247931862&west=-9.1307866573334)
- [https://www.spotahome.com/s/lisbon/for-rent:residences?move-in=2021-09-01&budget=0-400&features\[\]=students&rentalType\[\]=shortTerm](https://www.spotahome.com/s/lisbon/for-rent:residences?move-in=2021-09-01&budget=0-400&features[]=students&rentalType[]=shortTerm)
- <https://booking.inlifeportugal.com/accommodation/Lisboa>
- <https://www.esnlisboa.org/housing-platforms>
- <https://erasmuslifelisboa.com/residences/>

The best neighbourhoods to look for houses are Baixa Chiado, Bairro Alto and Santos. Housing prices can differ from 300 to 500 euros depending on location and quality of the apartment.

leisure & culture

The lifestyle in Portugal is amazing! The people are very relaxed and being in a rush doesn't exist over there. It is a great exchange place if you want to relax and go the beach a lot, you can learn how to surf and explore amazing nature. Lisbon has a great place and it is easy to visit other places like the Algarve or Porto. The nightlife is amazing and food and drinks are cheaper than in the Netherlands. I would definitely recommend taking a lot of trips and experience Portugal!

suggestions/tips

Take a membership at Erasmus Life Lisboa, learn how to surf, and really take some time to find a good apartment in the center, because then you can walk almost everywhere which is very nice!

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes! It is the perfect spot for exchange if you love the outdoors, surfing, partying in sunshine. The education takes some patience, but you will get used to it.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Start in time with your room! Otherwise all the good ones are gone, sign up for ErasmusLifeLisboa and enjoy!

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	
A whole lot of paperwork, this is just the way it is!	
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
The counselling & support from Utrecht University was very good. It was tough not to know what corona would mean for my exchange, the UU exchange office, especially Vera helped me a lot and had much patience. Even before knowing what destination I was going to pick, they knew how to advice me without pushing me in one direction. Very pleased with that proces!	
academic preparation	
My academic preparation is simple, Bestuurs- en organisatiewetenschap, the level is high enough to create an academic baseline and to be prepared for an exchange like this.	
language preparation	
Some duolingo in Portuguese. English level was already C1, so not needed.	
finances	
I was making sure to have enough money to spend in Lisbon as this is part of the exchange I would recommend to start early with the financial preparation!	

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
I followed mainly political courses like Contemporary International politics, Tradtion of Liberty, Artificial Intelligence Ethics and International Seminars. Furthermore I followed an Portuguese Language course for the cost of 360 euros at a different faculty. All together good for 30 ECTS	
academic quality of education activities	
Organisationwise, horrible. The university has good teachers but the organisation is a con of this university. Furthermore, the classes were often just made to listen 1.5 hours to a professor. Definetly not what we are used to in the Netherlands, sometimes I missed the interaction with teachers. The courses itself were very interesting most of the time. Portuguese language course was very intense!	
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	
Horrible and with Dutch directness you will be seen as annoying trying to know your classroom etc. etc. But don't give up on the counselling or support you need, just keep pushing and you will get whatever you need. So pro tip in Portugal: BE PATIENT	
transfer of credits	
Takes a while I think, as the processes at university are not that quick as in the Netherlands.	

STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	
None. It was more about getting to know the buildings yourself!	
accommodation	
I've had a great acconomation near Marques de Pombal, defintetly a good place to stay around! Near metro, buses and shops. I found my accomodation via ELL which is a student association based in Bairro Alto.	
leisure & culture	
Surf, Party, good weather, nice food and on.. on... on... Just amazing, the leisure time was a ten and its easy to make a lot of friends as there are a lot of foreign students in this beautiful city. The amount of time I had for	

leisure was more than enough. You can make it yourself easier if you have a proper accomodation and are good at planning your essay/examwork.

suggestions/tips

Nazare and Ericeira for Surf!! Furthermore, go and eat sushi at sushicome with your friend or go to guacamole, and mexican masterchef!

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes, if you want the time of a lifetime! I would not recommend this destination if you are searching for the best university in the world. I would recommend if you want to develop in a social way, learn a new language and find a lot of friends doing endless amounts of activities together!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

don't let corona stop you, even with restrictions its worth it. Don't doubt to much and just do it, you wiill not regret and enjoy life to the fullest here while its amazing for your self-development! Be aware that this is an unique chance on getting to know different cultures and learning how to work with them. It is very pleasing to see the intercultural processes that have to be made in a foreign country as student!

2019-2020

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The application process of my exchange university was a bit vague since you needed to upload many documents. Luckily I had friends who already went the first semester so they helped me with it.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Hetty Faber was my student advisor and she answered all my questions about going abroad and how to fill in forms, etc. That was very helpful!
academic preparation
There was not much academic preparation necessary, the level of difficulty was not different from my studies in the Netherlands.
language preparation
My English is quite good so I did not prepare myself any extra for the stay abroad. While I was there I tried to learn some Portuguese with an app but this was more for fun than for necessity.
finances
I applied for the Erasmus grant and I continued loaning so I got my finances in order for the stay there.

(interrupted) STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
welcome & orientation programme
study programme (content and organisational issues)
If I have to be honest, Catolica has many organisational issues. It was very often very unclear when or where I had lessons. I actually missed some lessons during Corona because the professor just forgot to forward the Zoom link to the international students... In terms of content, except for one course, it was very interesting and I learned a lot of new things.
academic quality of education activities
It varied a lot, I had two master courses (even though I am a bachelor student) which were challenging and very good, while I had another bachelor course which was very easy compared to courses I take in the Netherlands.
transfer of credits
25 ECTS

CORONAVIRUS CONSEQUENCES
support guidance of host university
They just told us the university was closed and that we would have online lessons. Not much guidance but did not expect that from them either.
support guidance of home university

Utrecht University e-mailed me what I would do; to go back home or not. I eventually choose to go home because the university send out an e-mail that they strongly recommended the return of all of their students abroad.

online offer and quality of digital courses

Some professors were better equipped to deal with the digitalizing of the course than others, but overall it was okay.

suggestions/tips on digital exchange

Sometimes communications with professors was really bad because they did not answer their e-mails, and you could of course not go into their office to ask things. It would be good if the university would let their professors know that in these times it is very important to regularly check your e-mail and to always answer students.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Catolica is very unorganized which can be quite frustrating. Apart from that I would still recommend it because mostly the content of the courses was good (they sometimes had very inspiring guest speakers like the old prime minister of Finland and Portugal) and Lisbon is a beautiful city which is very fun for studies abroad.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

To other students wanting to go to Lisbon to study: do not expect to much of the organizational skills of most Portuguese professors and other university employees. Their mentality about tests for example and dates and deadlines is way more relaxed than we are used to in the Netherlands. Eventually, everything will fall into place.

PREPARATION

exchange application process

To apply for my Erasmus exchange, I had to write a motivation letter for my approval at the UU, which in their turn arranged the approval at the university in Lisbon. It took a long time before I got notified about the official approval by the university in Lisbon.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The REBO international office helped me to send reminders to the receiving university when it took very long for them to send the official approval for my Erasmus.

academic preparation

There was no need for academic preparation, because my courses in Lisbon were similar to my study field in The Netherlands. I only did the mandatory language test of OLS in English.

language preparation

Because my courses were in English, there was no need for me to learn Portuguese on beforehand. It is important to figure out if you can reach enough ECTS with English courses, or if you have to do additional courses in Portuguese.

finances

The life in Portugal is relatively cheap compared to the Netherlands. The most basic rooms at student residences are about €200 a month. When you want a more luxurious room of a private owner, €300-€400 is a fair price. Beers and other drinks are very cheap at some parts of the city, and groceries are a little cheaper. Also public transport (€30 a month for unlimited travel), Uber and Bolt (the cheaper version of Uber in Portugal) are cheap. Still, I can recommend to save some extra money on top of the Erasmus Grant before you go on exchange, as it gives you the possibility to make the most of your time, for example by doing a trip to The Azores.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

With the available English courses, I had the opportunity to get more than 30 ECTS, although a lot of courses only represented 3 ECTS, which means you had to do a lot of smaller courses. I only needed 22,5 ECTS to get my Erasmus Grant, which meant I only did five courses. Some of them are 3 ECTS, some are 5,5 or 6 ECTS.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality of my department was lower than I am used to in the Netherlands. Also, the study load was lower. However, most of the teachers spoke well English and some of them gave very interesting lectures. The exams and essays were also not very difficult.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The international officer was not very reliable, as he was very slow to give the Erasmus students access to the Moodle platform (the online system of the university). Besides, he did not answer emails sometimes, so you had to visit him at his office to ask anything.

transfer of credits

I have not received the transfer of credits yet, and I expect it to take some more time, as the university in Portugal is very slow in getting these things done.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

My own department only had a short welcome session for the entire department, but did not arrange anything specific for the Erasmus students, while a lot of other universities did. However, the two Erasmus student organizations, ELL (Erasmus Life Lisboa) and ESN (Erasmus Student Network), have a lot of activities for Erasmus students in the first few weeks. I strongly recommend to get both of their cards at their offices when you arrive in Lisbon, as they provide a lot of discounts for clubs and because they have some pretty cool activities. However, I recommend to plan trips with some other people by yourselves if you have the chance.

accommodation

The best way to get a good house with other students is by renting it at Uniplaces. The only disadvantage is that you have to pay a service fee to Uniplaces (with the discount of ESN it's €100), but you will get a certified room by Uniplaces in return, and no problems with fake pictures of the house or weird landlords, so the fee is totally worth it. Make sure you book a room about three or four months before you leave, otherwise most of the good rooms are already booked.

leisure & culture

Lisbon is a very beautiful city which has lots of sightseeings to offer. Personally, I loved to see the sunsets at the miradouros (viewpoints). Therefore, make sure to go to miradouro da senhora do monte, miradouro da graca and panoramico de Monsanto for the best views over the city. I also recommend to go to some places just outside of Lisbon by train, such as Cascais and Sintra.

suggestions/tips

Erasmus corner in Bairro Alto is the place to meet a lot of fellow Erasmus students. Go there in the first few weeks to meet a lot of new people. When you are in Bairro Alto, make sure to order a shot and a beer at Nunu bar for €1,75, and see what happens!

Some nice other places to out are Anjos70, Casa independente, Urban Beach and Lisboa Rio.

When you have time, make some trips to the Azores Islands, Porto, Coimbra and the south of Spain (Sevilla, Malaga and Granada).

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Definitely! The city is not too big and not too small, so there is always something to do. The atmosphere in the city is very chill, as people are always outside when the weather is good (which is most of the time). Get used to the Southern European lifestyle and you will stop being annoyed by the slowness of how some things are done!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Enjoy the city, the weather and the people as much as you can, because before you realize it, your exchange is over!

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process maybe seems a lot of work, but in my opinion, it takes not too much time or effort, and there are enough people that can help you with the application. For me, it was a problem that people of the university in Lisbon were not responding for several weeks. This was stressful because I was afraid that I would miss the deadline (I needed their signature on my learning agreement). However, after a lot of emails (don't be embarrassed if you send them a lot of emails, I found out that almost every Erasmus student did this to get their documents signed).

counselling & support at Utrecht University

In my experience, the support of the Exchange Office was very helpful. Sometimes, it can take a while till they respond to an email because it is very busy (everyone needs them at the same time I think). But you can always call them or pass by, and that was perfect to me.

academic preparation

The academic preparation consists mostly of choosing your courses and reading the syllabus. In my case, there was not that much information available about the courses at Universidade Catolica Portuguesa. This was a struggle. It was hard to find the right information, and I had to follow mostly master courses (because there were only a few bachelor courses in English). For choosing the right courses, I asked people who had studied in Lisbon before for some advice. In my case, it was not difficult to change some courses when I arrived in Lisbon and received my schedule.

language preparation

All the courses that I followed in Lisbon were in English. I didn't do any language preparation, but the OLS Erasmus+ courses (online) can be very helpful if you want to improve your English.

finances

Life in Lisbon is cheaper than in the Netherlands, but the price for a room is maybe the same as in Utrecht (at least if you want to rent your room by an organization that you can trust, or if you want a room in the center of Lisbon, which I would really recommend). I did not have a job during my exchange, as I preferred to have the freedom to do whatever I wanted to do (like traveling in the weekends and living 'day by day' while you don't have to say 'no' to people because you have to work..). I saved some money before I went to Lisbon, and that was really helpful (but not necessary if you cannot do this).

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The courses that I followed were mostly master courses because these were taught in English. As a bachelor student, you don't have to be afraid that these courses will be too difficult. In my experience - when I compare the level of education at Catolica with the level of education of my faculty (Utrecht School of Governance) - I would say that the papers and exams in Lisbon are less difficult. The topics of the courses are interesting and the study program has mostly focused on international politics.

academic quality of education activities

In my opinion, the academic quality is a little bit lower than in the Netherlands, but you will still learn enough. Some courses were about topics that were completely new for me, and that was challenging.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The professors are very helpful, and there is also a person that can help you with specific things related to your 'exchange'. However, you should not expect the same level of support as you get from the International Office in Utrecht, but you will be fine (just send a lot of emails sometimes, you have to be on top of it if you want something to be arranged).

transfer of credits

It takes a while before you will get your credits, but you will get used to this (it is the 'problem' with a lot of things in Portugal). You receive a 'grade' between 0 and 20, and in the Netherlands this will be transferred to 'failed' or 'passed'.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was not really a welcome or orientation program. In one of my first days in Lisbon, I passed by the office of the man that will help you as an exchange student at Catolica. He explained a little bit about the university and gave me my schedule and student number. Later, there was a day for international students organized by the University (not only our faculty), but unfortunately, we had an exam that day...

accommodation

I rented a room by Uniplaces. I decided to share a room with a girl that I already knew from home, and we paid 500 euros together. Because it was only for 5 months, I did not have any problems with sharing a room, and it saved me a lot of money. The location was perfect: Avenida (walking distance from almost everything in the center of Lisbon and very close to the metro line that goes to the university). In the first few months, I was almost never at home (because the sun was shining all day and you want to see the city/the country). In my opinion, you should better choose a cheap room in the center (that maybe looks a little bit ugly or old), instead of a beautiful room further away (because you probably will not spend that much time in your room).

leisure & culture

Portuguese people are very nice and relaxed. It seems like they are never stressed or in a hurry. I really enjoyed just sitting on a terrace (with very cheap wine or sangria) and watch the 'life' on the streets. Lisbon is very 'cozy' with all the small streets, colorful houses and lots of restaurants. Also, there is rich student life and there are two student associations for international students. They organize party's, cultural days and weekend trips to see the country. Besides all this, I should not forget to mention the beach. Lisbon is very close to the beach, and you can surf whenever you want!

suggestions/tips

I would recommend that you just say 'yes' to everything in the first few weeks :) You will get to know so many people in a short time, and that is great. Another suggestion is to plan trips during your weekends or days off, because the rest of Portugal is amazing too! The Azores is the most beautiful place that I have ever been to! (it takes a few hours by plane, but because it is part of Portugal, it is very cheap).

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would definitely recommend studying in Lisbon! It is a lovely city, with a rich student life for internationals. It is also not too expensive. You can get a 'Bica' (espresso) for 60 cents, for example, and you can have cheap dinners at restaurants as well. The sun is almost always shining and in my first few weeks, it seemed like the summer would never come to an end. The beaches are perfect and the people are very friendly!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

x

PREPARATION

exchange application process

As long as I can remember I wanted to study abroad. The specific exchange application process is clear and easy. It only costs you a lot of time, so it's recommended to start in time.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The counselling and support from the UU was good. When you had questions about anything, the proces etc, they answered very fast. Also, they helped me to make a choice and sort out all the opportunities and the options. Therefore, it's very clear that you know what you want to do and what is possible to do.

academic preparation

A few months before my exchange I already chosed the course I wanted to follow. However, I had to change almost half of my courses. Some course were given in Portuguese, while they used to be in English. Also, all the courses I wanted to follow at other faculties were impossible to follow. Therefore, my whole study scheme was changed in the first weeks that I arrived. To switch a course is very easy, you only have to mail the coordiantor and they will add you to the course.

language preparation

I did no language preparation, because all the courses that I was going to follow were in English. The English at the university is not that hard, so you will easily understand.

finances

The life in Lisbon is a little bit cheapier than the life in Utrecht. Especially the lunches in restaurants, bars and cafés. However, the supermarket and the rent are equally expensive.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study programme was not that hard. The classes were, in my opinion, somewhat superficial. This was because of the courses that I followed were mastercourses and this were courses from 9 hours for 3 ECTS. Therefore, the material wasn't going very deep.

academic quality of education activities

The quality was not always that good in my opinion. The didactics were very different from what I'm used to. Most of the time the teacher is talking for the full hours and that's it. You can asks questions if you want, but they don't ask a lot of you, they're ok with the fact that you're there. Also the study progamme is a bit unclear, the dates for the tests and papers are vague, the precise material to study is not clear etc.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The coordinator of the university was very easygoing. They reacted very badly and slowly on questions send by mail. So the best thing is going by the office and ask your question there. At the office they were helpful and they would give you more advice.

transfer of credits

The transfer of my credit has not yet taken place.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The university didn't organize a welcome or orientation programme. We got some information from the coordinator but that was it. The other student associations like, ELL and ESN were organizing a lot of different activities like parties, dinners and trips etc.

accommodation

I was living in a studenthouse that I found on Uniplaces with 5 other students. I lived together with one other dutch girl, two italians and two french students. The atmosphere in the house was very nice and sometimes we ate together or something. My landlord was very nice and kind, but I heard a lot of stories about landlords that were very mean, so it's smart to check the reviews on Uniplaces.

leisure & culture

Lisbon has a lot of different sides. In the summer you're on the beach in less than one hour. It's also nice to take some surf lessons here, you can do this the whole year. Also, there are a lot of international students living in Lisbon, therefore there are loads of activities to do. In the evening you can go to the Erasmus corner, this is a corner on the street where you can hang out and drink very cheap Sangria or Beer. Also, there are some good opportunities to do some trips with Erasmus Life Lisboa or Erasmus Student Network Lisbon. People in Lisbon love to eat in restaurant, and eat late in comparison to the Netherlands.

suggestions/tips

Try to see more of the beautiful country of Portugal. If you're able, try to book a flight to the Azores, these are the most beautiful Islands and are a part of Portugal. The flight takes about 2 hours and the island is simply stunning, so much green and the nature is breathtaking.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes, i would definitely recommend Lisbon as Erasmus destination. You should not go for the level of education, because the level isn't that high. But you should go if you want to experience another culture, see a beautiful country and have lots of fun.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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2018-2019

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The first part of the exchange application process is the same for all universities connected with the USBO departement in Utrecht. For the application it is necessary to write a motivation letter of one page, in this motivation letter I wrote about three things. First, why I wanted to study abroad, secondly why I wanted to go especially to Portugal and the Catolica University and in the end I explained my decision for some of the courses. Next to this motivation letter you have to hand in a study plan an financial plan.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
While preparing my application for my university I asked for help from a friend who studied last year in Lisbon and furthermore I also used the information from the site of Utrecht University. After the confirmation of the University in Portugal the counselling of Utrecht University was helpful, I could ask my contact person question about what I have to prepare, because my University in Portugal was quite slow with communicating and answering our questions.
academic preparation
The academic preparation started when I had to send my application with a study plan. In this study plan I had to fill in the courses I wanted to follow in Portugal. Because I didn't know a lot about the content and subjects of the courses I asked students who have been to my university the year before me, they gave me some more information. But they also said it wasn't that important yet to already exactly know all your courses because it was easy to change after the confirmation of the university or even when arrived in Portugal. Because there were no study manuals available online I choose courses I heard good stories about from other students, but in the end it was quite easy to change some courses when I was in Portugal. Two courses were in the same time schedule, so I had to change one of them, but that doesn't led to a lot of problems.
language preparation
At the Catolica University in Lisbon it's possible to follow courses in Portuguese and English. I only choose for courses in English, so I didn't do something like a language course to improve my Portuguese before I went on my Erasmus.
finances
To manage my finances in Portugal I made a financial plan which was obligated for the application process. The first important thing to fix is the money for public transport. It is possible to get around the 90 euros for your student OV-card when you don't use it because of studying abroad. During my stay in Lisbon I had some monthly costs like the public transport card and my apartment. Furthermore it was for my university not necessary to buy books or literature. I bought twice a booklet for courses, but didn't have to invest more in study materials.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
For international students the Catolica school of Lisbon has many different options for courses. My department in the Netherlands was connected to the Political science faculty in Lisbon. That meant I need to take at least 51% of my credits at courses from the Political science faculty. In total there were fifteen different courses I could choose on this faculty, some of them were 3 credits, some 5,5 and some 6. In total I took seven different courses, in total 32,5 ECTS. From the seven courses one was from another faculty. Besides the courses about democracy, international politics, domestic conflicts and liberty I took one course at the Human Sciences faculty about the culture and society of Portugal. The courses of 3 ECTS were only one half of the semester and had once a week a course of 1,5 hours. The courses of 5,5 and 6 ECTS were for the whole semester and had every week twice a class from 1,5 hours. All the courses were at the same campus, so I didn't had to travel a lot between my classes.

academic quality of education activities
When I went to Lisbon I expected that the level and way of education would be quite different as we are used to in the Netherlands. The way of teaching differs a lot per course. All my classes were in a group of 20 to 30 students. Some courses were with Portuguese and international students and some only for international students and it's possible to attend bachelor and master classes. The quality of these courses are also different logically. The biggest difference with the Netherlands are presentations from students in class. I noticed that it is in Portugal normal to just read the information from your paper, while in the Netherlands is more attention for the presentation skills and way of presenting the content.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
At the Catolica University in Lisbon there it was in the beginning quite difficult to find the right information and things to use. There was an introduction from our faculty where the contact person told all the Erasmus student everything about the courses, grades and schedules. But, because it was in the first week there was also a lot he didn't know yet and in the following weeks he was very busy and difficult to reach for other questions or more information. At the introduction there was one student who gave us a walking tour through the university building, that was very handy to know where everything was in the building. During the semester the university informed us well about changes in the schedule, but it was difficult to reach them by mail or get fast answers when you had an urgent question.
transfer of credits
During my semester in Lisbon I followed courses in total worth 32,5 ECTS, some on Bachelor's level, some masters. Before I went to Lisbon I checked with my contact person in Utrecht if all the credits for the courses were valid in the Netherlands. When I get my transcript of records the credits from the seven different courses will count for my Dutch bachelor. The professors in Portugal are not very fast, it took them at least three weeks to send the grades from exams and essays.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
In Lisbon there are two big student organizations for Erasmus students, first of all European Student Network (ESN), this organization is present in many European countries in student cities. The second organization is Erasmus Life Lisboa (ELL). Both organizations have many activities in the first month of your Erasmus. Literally every day there were one or two activities to meet new people or explore the city. Examples of activities are welcome dinners, surfing experiences, walking tours, pubcrawls or trips to cities close by. I really liked all those activities and joined many of them to get known other international students and make friends. Next to the general activities for all the Erasmus students most universities have there introduction programme as well. Because of the fact my faculty only had 25 international students we didn't had such an orientation programme but I heard from other students that they went with their university through the city and things like that.
accommodation
When you start looking on time (two/three months in advance) finding an accommodation in Lisbon is not very difficult. There are several websites where rooms for Erasmus students are available. The two easiest and famous ones are Uniplaces and the Erasmus housing department. I expected that the rooms in Lisbon would be cheaper than in the Netherlands, but actually the prices in the centre of the city were quite the same as in Utrecht. But, when you start looking for a room very early it is of course easier to find a cheaper room on a nice location.
leisure & culture
There are a lot of things to do in Lisbon during your leisure, with museums, viewing points, the beach, a nice city centre and cultural highlights there are many options to spent your time when you don't have to study. The culture in Portugal is very relaxed, Portuguese people don't stress, which also led to the fact that they are almost never on time, but that is for nobody really a point because everyone is taking it easy.
suggestions/tips

In my first two weeks before university started I joined many welcome activities from the student organizations. I would recommend that to do because it is the perfect opportunity to meet new people and explore the city. Furthermore was visiting the Azores definitely a highlight for me, this Island group was super beautiful!

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

After my semester in Lisbon I would definitely recommend this destination to others. In general was my Erasmus experience amazing and I think it is also very nice in other countries, but I really enjoyed my time in Lisbon and award other students to have such an experience as well. First of all was the country very nice, the beautiful nature, many activities to do, relaxed atmosphere, great weather and nice people made it a very positive stay for me. Furthermore, the Catolica university was a good university for me. Most of the courses were quite interested and the way of teaching fits me. Besides the lack of communication sometimes was studying at Catolica a satisfieing experience.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process was not that complicated. For me it helped to make a list of things that had to be done. For the Erasmus grant there are some requirements, but online you can find a checklist which might be helpful. Writing the motivation letter was for me the most difficult part. However, with some help of friends I managed to do it.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I experienced the help of the UU as useful. The international office is always reachable for questions. It took a while before UCP had sent us the acceptance mail, so the international office called Lisbon to ask about that for example.

academic preparation

There was not a lot academic preparation to be done for the exchange. The only thing I did was choosing courses. It was a bit unpractical that not all of the courses had a good description at the website of Catolica. I asked advice from students who have been to Lisbon before which courses and professors are interesting.

language preparation

Since all my courses at UCP were in English, I did not prepare anything for the language.

finances

I made the required financial plan. The grant is very helpful, but pay attention that you receive this money only when you are already in Lisbon. So make sure you have some savings which you can use the first weeks. Many landlords ask for example for a deposit for the room.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I took mostly master courses, because they are in English and most bachelor courses are not. This means that you are in class with master students, but also some PhD'ers. They are really motivated, but the level was not too high for bachelor students. The main themes of the courses are international relations and political sciences. I also had two courses more related to political philosophy, which I really liked.

academic quality of education activities

I experienced the quality and the level of the courses a bit easier compared to Utrecht. I only had two/three days a week classes and the preparations for the classes was not that much. Most courses ended with writing an individual paper.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The responsible person for the Erasmus students at IEP was a bit chaotic. Some things took very long to arrange, for example we received the schedule very late. For Erasmus students they are very flexible. We were still able to change courses after some weeks. For me it was a disappointment that they promised us we could take courses at all faculties, but in the end this was not possible.

transfer of credits

Professors are quite slow with grading exams and papers, so you have to wait some time before you get them.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The politics department did not offer any welcome program. In the beginning we got a tour about the university and that is all. We organised a picknick ourselves with the Erasmus students and that was very nice. The Erasmus organizations ELL and ESN offer very nice welcome activities in the first months.

accommodation

I found a room through Uniplaces, which is easy but a bit expensive because you have to pay some fees. I was very happy I fixed a room in advance, because finding a room after you arrived is not that easy. I would advise students to arrange this before. The prices for rooms are between 350 and 500 euro. Uber is very cheap in Lisbon, so do not worry too much if you can't find a room very close to the bars and clubs.

leisure & culture

I completely loved the city. It is close to the beach so in September and October I went a lot to the beach in my free time. In the area of Bairro Alto are people just standing on the streets while having a beer and the atmosphere is amazing there. The Erasmus corner is also located in this neighbourhood and this is the place to meet other Erasmus students. I travelled a lot in my Erasmus year, for example Algarve, Porto, Azores and Coimbra. But with the ESN card you get discount with Ryanair, so it is also very easy to make trips in other countries. In Lisbon, there are many places you can go out for a cheap dinner, like illegal restaurants. You can everywhere buy delicious pastel da nata for only one euro.

suggestions/tips

Most important, try to accept the Portuguese culture. Things go a lot slower here and something you just have to wait. Also at Catolica might things go a bit different than you are used to maybe, but remember that in the end everything will be fine.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would definitely recommend Lisbon as a destination for Erasmus. Catolica is maybe not the best university ever, but the city is amazing. And it is actually nice as an Erasmus student to have lots of free time to explore and have fun with your new friends.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I did not take a Portuguese language course myself, but I heard from several people that the language course offered by Catolica is very expensive and not that good. It is around 300 euros. You can better arrange a language course through ELL or ESN, they are cheaper and better.

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process is not a lot of work. Everything was made clear because of information meetings. Besides this, there is a lot of information on the website of the UU.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support of the university was helpful. We had problems with our host university not signing our learning agreement on time, so the university made sure the delay would not give problems.

academic preparation

The academic preparation is more about choosing the courses you want to take. Besides this it was helpful for me to look into the political system in Portugal for some courses.

language preparation

Your English needs to be good enough to follow English lectures and to read English papers but this level is comparable with the level that you need at the UU.

finances

For me the big costs were mostly going on trips and going out for dinners. The prices for a room are between 350 and 500 euros and a travelcard in the city is about 30 euros a month. The amount of money you spend next to this, depends on things like travelling and going out. The Erasmus grant and the OV compensation help a lot.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

At UCP most English courses are mastercourses. These are 3 ECTS and 9 hours in total. To get 30 ECTS I had to take 8 courses to be able to get 30 ECTS. This is quite a lot but on the other hand the courses are really short. After most of the courses you have to write a paper and with some there is a test.

Our learning agreement was basically to have an idea about what you like because some courses are overlapping and some of the courses are in the weekend. Besides this, almost all of my courses were in the evening. I got used to this but it is something to consider.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality was different from what I am used to at the UU. The courses use good academic books and papers but the way of teaching is different. It is more listening to the teacher and not a lot of interaction. There is also not a lot of use of exercises but you do have to read a lot of papers.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The counselling was not very good at UCP. Most of us didn't get a reply to our learning agreement so we had to talk to Miguel (the contactperson for Erasmusstudents) a lot. Besides this, we never got our studentcard and the schedules of courses and tests arrived late. That administrative things take long is also a cultural thing, so this does happen more often. In the end someone else became the contactperson and this was an improvement.

transfer of credits

I do not have my grades yet but the university in Lisbon will send the transcript of records somewhere in the beginning of February when the teachers graded all the work.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Our faculty was the only one that did not have an orientation programme. They did arrange a get together to get to know each other a little bit better. Because it is a pretty small faculty, you do get to know each other more easily in classes and in the breaks.

accommodation

I rented a room in Ciado which was a great location. It was less noisy than in Bairro Alto but still close to everything. My rent was 460 which is not very cheap but the last couple of years the rents raised a lot in Lisbon. The university recommended to start searching for a room when I arrived to the city but I didn't want to take this risk so I booked my room early at Uniplace. Looking back I am happy I did this because I had a great location and a nice house.

leisure & culture

Portuguese people are very nice and helpful. The weather in Lisbon is also very nice. There is beach weather until the end of October and in January it was still 13/16 degrees with sun. Lisbon has a lot to offer. There are a lot of nice places to eat with friends and Bairro Alto is fun to go out. The viewpoints are also very beautiful and nice to hang out with friends. You won't get bored easily in Lisbon.

suggestions/tips

Sintra is easy to go to with the train and has beautiful palaces. I really liked Quinta da Regaleira because of the gardens surrounding it. I also went to the island Berlengas with the ELL (Erasmus Life Lisboa). This is only open until the beginning of October so you should go there on time, but it was really beautiful. Closer to Lisbon is the beach praia da foz da telha. This was a less crowded beach and really beautiful. At last, don't forget to try a pastel de nata at marteigaria. In my opinion these are the best ones.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes I would recommend it. UCP is not of the same quality as the UU and some courses were not that interesting in my opinion but you do learn new things and in my opinion Lisbon was totally worth it.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Try to travel because there are a lot of beautiful places in Portugal to visit besides Lisbon. My other recommendation is to take a room in the city center and not close to the university. The public transport is fine and a room in the city center has way more to offer.

PREPARATION

exchange application process

it was not a difficult process to apply for Universidade Catolica. It was merely administrative, we did not need to write a motivation letter etc. The only thing is that you have to be patient. We received information much later than many of my fellow students who would do their erasmus somewhere else.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I think the counselling and support was fine. My studies already have this contact with Universidade Catolica for a long time, so it was very reliable. Something to take into account is that the international office and the also the coordinator at my studies (USBO) are not working everyday. Therefore, be in time! If you need a signature, don't let it come down to the last week. For me it was also helpful to talk with a student that had been to Universidade Catolica. Especially for choosing the courses, because they could tell me for example how the professor was for a certain course.

academic preparation

I did not do any additional academic preparation and I could catch up with the level of the courses I took in Lisbon.

language preparation

I only took English courses, because I don't speak Portuguese. The disadvantage of that is that there were only 2 courses in the bachelor of political sciences at catolica, therefore I had to take mostly master courses, which were plenty in english. Don't let this scare you, the level was adequate for a dutch third year bachelor student.

finances

Portugal is on the average a bit cheaper than the Netherlands. The rent is approximately the same as in Utrecht (400 a month), groceries slightly cheaper and going out for dinner/drinks and public transfer is much cheaper! However, I expect that during your erasmus period here you won't work and you will do some trips and go out more than you do back home. Therefore, I was working abroad in the summer: I did not pay for an expensive holiday and even earned extra money.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I think the curriculum of Political Sciences and International relations in Lisbon did not entirely suit with my study of Public administration and organizational sciences in Utrecht. I had to choose at least 50% of my courses in the political sciences and international relations faculty. I thought that I could do my other courses more on the organizational and management subjects in another department, of Economics and Business. However, after my arrival it turned out that that was very difficult, because this faculty put all their own students first and then they did not have spots for other students in the most courses. It was possible to do courses in the Humanities faculty.

academic quality of education activities

In my opinion the academic quality was a little bit lower than in Utrecht. However, the level is not too low since I took master courses while I am a bachelor student. The classes are really small (about 30 students), which I liked.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The organization for Erasmus students at the politics department of Catolica was not very good. The contact person was very slow and did not help a lot. But that is also part of the experience abroad, I suppose. I learned to be very active myself if I want to get things done, instead of waiting for a coordinator to take care of it.

transfer of credits

I did not receive the transcript of records yet. However they have the same system with ECTS, so I expect it will not be a problem.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The politics department (IEP) did only organize one small introductory meeting. I have heard that many other departments and other universities had much more elaborate introduction activities. However, I did not miss it much, because there were only about 30 erasmus students in the department, so we got to know each other quite quickly. Also, there are 2 big organizations in Lisbon for erasmus students in the city in general: Erasmus Life Lisboa (ELL) and Erasmus Students Network (ESN). Both of them organize a lot of fun activities (dinner, trip to another city, surfclass, walkingtour etc), so don't be afraid you won't meet other erasmus students!

accommodation

I was very lucky with my accommodation, because I found something via via. I don't know exactly what sites etcetera other students used to find an accommodation. At least accommodation is spread around the city, there is not a campus. I think an average rent is approximately 400 euros per month (all expenses included).

leisure & culture

There is so much to do in Lisbon! I started surfing here, since there are great waves here and the beach is only half an hour away! There is also a lot of culture in Lisbon, from street art and artists to old cathedrals. It is also easy to do many other small trips in Portugal, to Sintra, Porto, Coimbra and Algarve (for hiking or surfing). Nightlife in Lisbon also great, there are many big clubs, an area with a lot of very small bars (Bairro Alto) and also more hidden alternative and techno places.

suggestions/tips

Go to Lisbon already a week or two weeks before your university starts. Because it is very overwhelming to start living here. So it is very nice to have two weeks or so to get used to it and to get to know your way around.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Definitely! Portugal is amazing! There is so much to see and to do and the sun makes it all even better. There are a lot of Erasmus students here, so making friends has never been easier. However, it is also nice to actively try to hang out with some Portuguese people, because this comes less naturally. The university is alright. I had to write many essays. I don't like that so much in itself, but they were very free in choosing topics. Which gives you the chance to make it as interesting to yourself as you want.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

No. If you have any questions, you can contact me through the International Exchange Office!.

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Was done easily and clear. What I found very difficult was all the paperwork and administrative tasks you have to do before, during and after the mobility. This is very confusing and I noticed that a lot of students struggled with this (when it comes to when what is needed, collecting autographs, scanning printing all types of documents etc).

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I found that the everyone from UU was very happy to help, however there was sometimes confusion because different things were said about the exchange process. Sometimes I felt like there was a lot of different information that did not always match

academic preparation

This was done well and you can see the available courses in advance (however, not every course had a description)

language preparation

My courses were all in English so I did not prepare that. However, I did practice some Portuguese at home before departure. I found that you do not need to speak Portuguese in order to live and study in Portugal, however, it is nice to learn the language for example through an app or with Portuguese or Brazilian friends.

finances

In advance I had to get my finances sorted out, Portugal is quite cheap but the rent is not cheap.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I found the content quite interesting, organisation-wise there could be some improvement.

academic quality of education activities

I liked the programme because it was really broad and there were different ways of testing (take home exam, portfolio, 'regular' test). I did not find the programme too challenging or demanding

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Everyone was very helpful and easy to talk to, because they all work in the same building

transfer of credits

To get 30 credits you need to do quite some courses because some courses only are for 3 points. But the courses are not really intensive in that case so its easy to do.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

I found that there was no welcome programme or activities from the University. I found this a shame, because I feel like these activities are always good when it comes to breaking the ice. However ELL and ESN organize a lot of welcome activities

accommodation

The housing in Lisbon is not very cheap and the buildings are often not so modern. For example, in my flat a lot of things were broken and besides that there was no heating and the facilities were minimal. However I did

really like my flat due to my international roommates, I think this was the case with a lot of people who choose to live with other Erasmus students.

leisure & culture

Lisbon is a perfect place when it comes to leisure and culture. In the city itself there is plenty sights, buildings and other point of interests. Besides that there is a lot of nightlife and the beach is very close, which makes it a perfect destination for surfing. It also easy to travel from Lisbon to different places in Portugal (Algarve, Sintra, etc.).

suggestions/tips

For other students I would recommend to go live with other students, because it is a easy way to make friends. I lived with 11 students in total and that sounds like a lot but I liked it. Also the transport in Lisbon is not always easy so its not a bad idea to look for a house which is in the city centre.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would definitely recommend this destination for other students, because like I mentioned before, it has a lot to offer when it comes to leisure, sport, activities, culture etc. Catolica is seen as one of the best universities in Lisbon, but it is definitely different than UU.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Like I said before, studying in Lisbon is very different than in Utrecht. It is different regarding schedules (in Lisbon I often had lessons in the evening), the level of intensity and the way the lectures are being given. So it's a good thing to think about that.